

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING REPEAT USUN 3891 ACTION SECTATE IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: PFOR, UN

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN

FOLLOWING IS NEW YORK TIMES STORY WHICH APPEARS IN
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, FIRST EDITION, PAGE 10

QUOTE

CONTROVERSIES OVER YUGOSLAVS DENIED BY ENVOY

SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON, SEPT 22 -- THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND AMBASSADOR
LAURENCE H. SILBERMAN HAVE ISSUED DENIALS OF AN ARTICLE IN THE
NEW YORK TIMES REPORTING THAT THE ENVOY TO YUGOSLAVIA HAD
PROVOKED THE REASSIGNMENT OF A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER AND
OTHER PROBLEMS FOR HIS SUPERIORS.

THE DENIAL WAS MADE IN A STATEMENT BY FREDERICK Z. BROWN
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SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT, AND AMPLIFIED YESTERDAY IN A

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN.

THE DENIALS CENTERED ON A CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE HANDLING OF AN INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE CASE INVOLVING LASZLO TOTH, A YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN DUAL NATIONAL WHO WAS ARRESTED IN YUGOSLAVIA LAST YEAR AND RELEASED JULY 23.

SPECIFICALLY, MR. SILBERMAN AND MR. BROWN DENIED THAT THE ENVOY HAD DEMANDED THE REMOVAL OF ALAN R. THOMPSON, THE YUGOSLAV DESK OFFICER, WHO WAS TRANSFERRED LAST MONTH AFTER A YEAR IN HIS POST. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS WHO HAD DESCRIBED THE CONTROVERSIAL EVENTS TO THE TIMES, AS REPORTED IN LAST SUNDAY'S EARLY EDITION, SAID TODAY THAT THEY STUCK BY THEIR VERSION.

THOMPSON TRANSFER IS AT ISSUE

THE OFFICIALS SAID MR. THOMPSON HAD BEEN "TAKEN OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE" COMING FROM MR. SILBERMAN. IN THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN SAID HE HAD "REQUESTED AT ONE POINT THAT THOMPSON NOT BE TRANSFERRED.

IN THE FORMAL STATEMENT, MR. BROWN SAID "NEITHER A REPRIMAND NOR A REQUEST FOR AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN'S RESIGNATION WAS EVER CONSIDERED AT ANY POLICY LEVEL IN THE DEPARTMENT," AS THE TIMES HAD REPORTED. AGAIN, THE OFFICIALS WHO HAD PROVIDED THAT ORIGINAL INFORMATION STUCK BY THEIR VERSIONS TODAY.

BOTH MR. BROWN AND AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN SAID SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER HAD NOT SENT AN ADVISORY MESSAGE ASKING THE ENVOY NOT TO PROVOKE NEW ALTERCATIONS WITH THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT. A HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL HAD PROVIDED THAT INFORMATION TO THE TIMES.

MR. SILBERMAN SPOKE IN A FRIENDLY TONE IN THE INTERVIEW, ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT HE HAD BEEN EXTREMELY ANGRY ABOUT THE ARTICLE SINCE HE REGARDED IT AS "FALSE." HE REJECTED THE TIMES DESCRIPTION OF HIM AS "A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN."

"I VIEW MYSELF AS A MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD REPUBLICAN," HE
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REMARKED.

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